

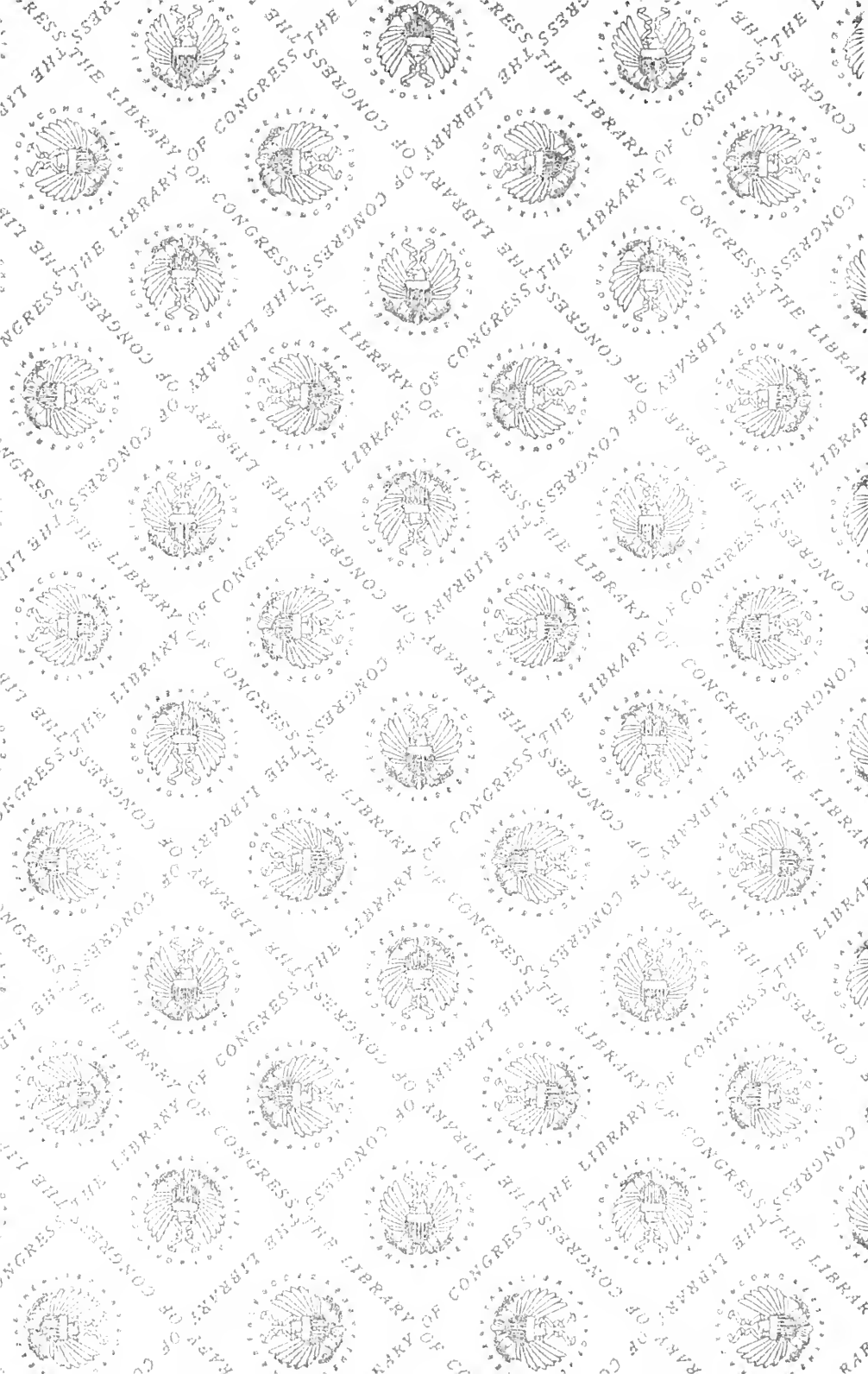
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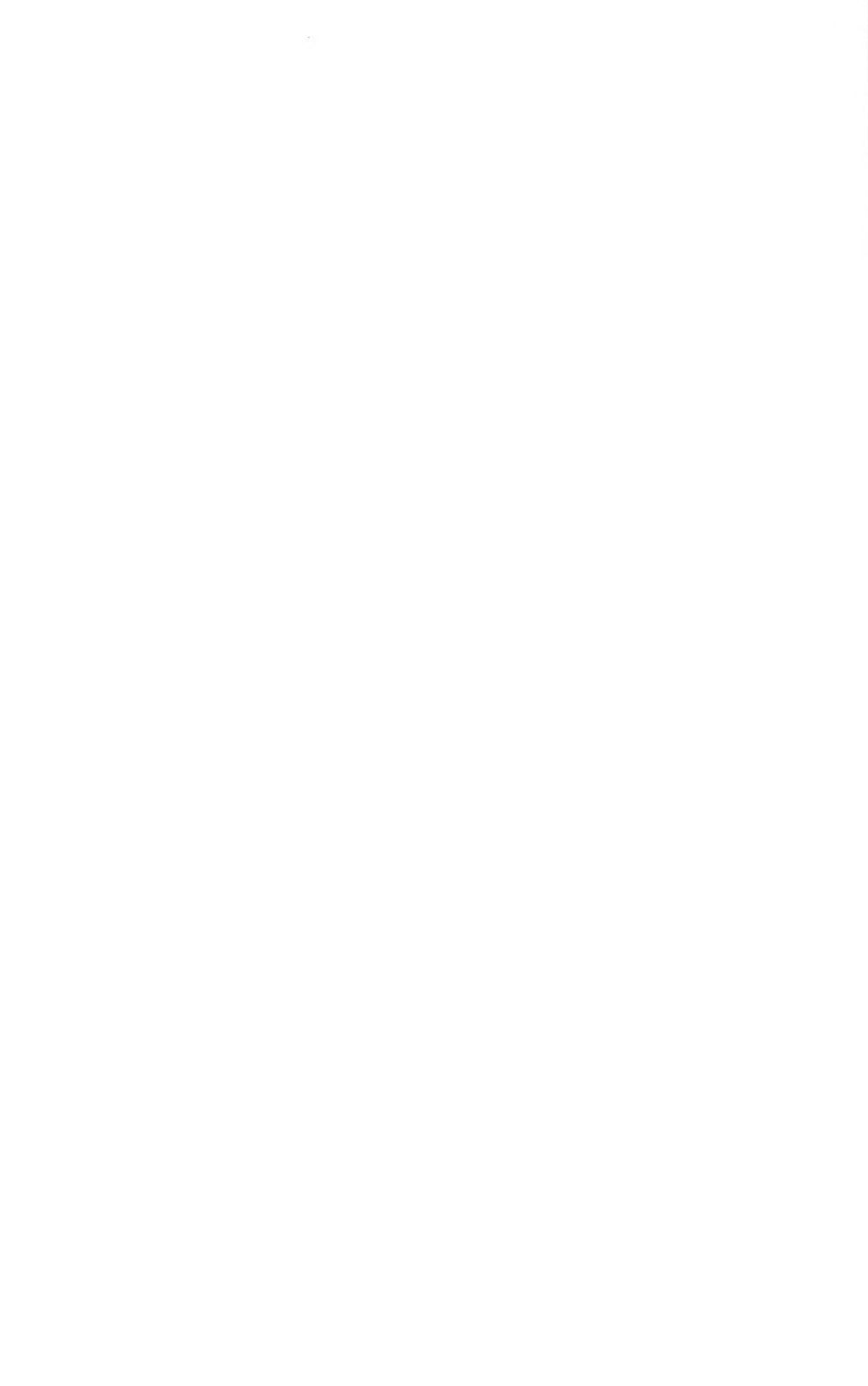
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of  
*The* GERMAN  
CHARACTER



A LECTURE  
BY  
PASTOR A. W. REINHART.



**SEVERAL TRAITS**  
**OF THE**  
**GERMAN CHARACTER:**

THEIR BEARING ON THE FORMATION  
OF THE  
AMERICAN NATIONAL CHARACTER.



**A LECTURE**  
**BY**  
**PASTOR A. W. REINHARD.**

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To my faithful and beloved friend, Dr. E. W.  
Saunders, of St. Louis, Missouri, these pages  
are most respectfully dedicated.

The Author.

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## THE LECTURE.

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„Macht und Freiheit, Recht und Sitte,  
Klarer Geist und starker Hieb  
Zuegeln dann aus starker Mitte  
Jeder Selbstsucht wilden Trieb,  
Und es mag am deutschen Wesen  
Noch einmal die Welt genesen.“

—Geibel.

During the preparation of this lecture I invited an acquaintance, a lady, to come and hear it. She asked me, “On what subject will you speak?” I answered, “On the German character.” “O,” said she, “I did not know that the Germans had a character.”

The incident reminds me of an anecdote that went through the press years ago. It tells of a man sitting with a lady in a railway car, who, in the course of their conversation, was overheard to remark, “I cannot bear the Germans; they are only good to sing and drink beer.”

A young German who happened to sit near by turned about and said, “Sir, kindly pardon me for interrupting you, but you say the Germans are only good to sing and drink beer. Can you tell me who is the most active Christian in England? Can you say who is the most distinguished scholar in Oxford? And also, do you know who is the greatest engineer in the United States?”

The gentleman gave an evasive reply.

“Well, I will tell you,” said the German. “The most active Christian in England is George Müller of Bristol; he is the foster-father of about one thousand orphans, and through him over one hundred missionaries and Christian workers are supported; he is a German. The most distinguished scholar in Oxford is Max Müller, whose “Chips from a German Workshop” are prized like so many jewels; he is a German. And the greatest engineer in the United States is Röbling; he built the Suspension Bridge across the Niagara river; he is a German. So you see there are Germans who can do else than sing and drink beer.”

If it were the object of this lecture to discuss both the negative and positive qualities of the German character it would be necessary to add some remarks to this conversation; but that is not the aim. As such, the German character is good, and of his good character it is the purpose to point out a few leading traits. Moreover, the faults of a nation are known the world over; less so its virtues. Nor does it seem any kinder to criticise a whole nation than an individual, remembering that we, too, have national faults; but it is a pleasant, because a Christian thing, to discover the good qualities of our neighbors, all the more when we reap benefits from their good character.

With due respect for national pride, and with a tolerable allowance for national prejudices, it is safe to say that the days of "Know-nothingism" are forever past. The citizens of the United States, complex as they are in respect to nationalities, have learned to have faith in one another, and this confidence is growing. As members of our great Commonwealth we are working out the genius of the Constitution, which recognizes all who accept our free institutions, keep our laws, and lead responsible lives. No man in the United States is valued on account of his nationality, but for his good character and for his acceptance of American principles.

At the first glance it might seem as if the people of this country were a conglomeration of all nations, devoid of a distinct national character. The fact is there is not another nation existing whose character can be more clearly defined than ours. We strive for the highest individual freedom, based on righteousness, truth and love. But since this country, from its beginning was composed of various nationalities, it is obvious that our national character became the product of these various forces. But the more the prejudices of the English, Irish, Scotch, Germans, Dutch, French, Spaniards and others, resident in the United States, have been overcome, the more their character has been amalgamated into one strong American character. "The mixture of allied races among us," says Herbert Spencer, "will produce a more powerful type of man than has existed hitherto." Nowhere are these forces so mightily at work as in the United States.

Next to the English speaking element, the Germans have ever been the strongest constituent of this nation. Germans and their descendants who still speak, or at least understand, the German language, number about twenty millions. Moreover, the stream of

German immigration is incessant. Thus they ever have been and still are contributing a large percentage to the upbuilding of our land and character. To state just what that quota is, lies beyond the scope of this address. All that this effort can attempt is to point out a few leading traits of character, to call attention to some of the notable achievements of the Germans in this land, and from these facts draw conclusions as to what influence has gone forth from the Germans in the formation of our national character.

The German's foremost trait of character is (permit me to use the German word) Innerlichkeit. The English word inwardness, as used by Shakespeare in the sentence, "You know my inwardness and love," and by Wykliff, "Ye are not anguished in us, but ye are anguished in your inwardness," exactly fits the idea. By it we are to understand the soul-life of the German, the man within himself, a life lived not for the sake of appearance, but first and last for its own sake. It is that simple life which Charles Wagner has so beautifully described in the chapter on "Notoriety." "In human society," he says "the forms which move for good remain invisible, even in our individual lives: what is best in us is incommunicable, buried in the depths of us. And the more vital are these sensibilities and intuitions, confounding themselves with the very essence of our being, the less ostentatious they are: they think themselves profaned by exposure to the light of day. There is a secret and inexpressible joy in possessing at the heart of one's being, an interior world, known only to God, whence, nevertheless, come impulses, enthusiasms, the daily renewal of courage and the most powerful motives for activity among our fellow-men. When this intimate life loses its intimacy, when man neglects it for what is superficial, he forfeits in worth all that is given in appearance." Thus the genial and versatile Parisian, in showing to the world how man ought consciously and conscientiously to live his inmost soul-life, unwittingly unfolds the character of his neighbor, the German. For Innerlichkeit is the essence of his being, the mainspring of his actions, the quality by which everything else in him must be measured. The very fact that the word Innerlichkeit, with its various derivatives, is used so frequently in the German language, while the word inwardness is used so little by us, as to be almost obsolete, shows strikingly the difference in the two characters.

By virtue of his Innerlichkeit, the German is a profound thinker, a thorough and original student, a man of research, on account

of which his institutions of learning have become foremost in the world. This explains why all German philosophers are idealists. The world of mind is all the world to him. He loves to dwell on underlying, abstract thought. He is highly prolific of theories. His mind is constantly inquiring, "What is back of the phenomena?" In dealing with concrete science, he prefers to investigate the first causes. Thus Helmholtz became the great physiologist, Virchow the founder of modern pathology, and Koch the discoverer of the bacillus tuberculi.

We Americans, on the other hand, have a distinct preference for practical knowledge. We are an inventive people. Our ingenuity is known the world over. We are a nation of experts. American surgeons, for example, have long ago been recognized to be superior to German surgeons. Germany even acknowledging this.

But we are inclined to be superficial. In our educational methods, we have suffered for centuries from a lack of thoroughness. American schoolmen have labored under the delusion that a scholar should cover as many studies as possible, rather than know less and know that well. In my own college days we read a half or a third of a Latin or Greek classic. No German professor would stop short of a whole book. Says Charles Skinner, State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction of the State of New York:

"More and more there is a tendency to overcrowd courses of study. This is not confined to schools of a particular class, but is, perhaps, more marked in the higher grades. Our schools are evidently trying to cover too much ground within a specified time. Our children are being hurried forward too rapidly. This policy certainly tends toward superficiality. We are paying too little attention to a well grounded preparation in what are usually denominated as essential or fundamental branches. Our children are hurrying too fast from one grade to another, from one subject to another, without mastering the successive steps by which they expect to rise. There is danger of our becoming a nation of poor spellers, readers and writers. Arithmetic, geography and grammar are thrown aside too early after insufficient study, and pupils are hurried through essential subjects to give more time for experiments and fads. We are not teaching our pupils thoroughness. They rush through their terms and often graduate too young; more often carelessly educated, if we can really say they are educated at all".

In respect to thoroughness in our educational methods, great

improvement has been made, but the correction is due, in a large measure, to German influence. To say that German schools lead the world at present is to use an almost commonplace expression. Johns Hopkins University has made the German university its model, and the schools and universities of Germany are thronged with American scholars, about three thousand being in the Fatherland.

In one instance German thoroughness has brought English and American scholarship to a rather deep humiliation. Professor Carpenter, in his well known Grammar, mentions "Mätzner's Englische Grammatik" as the chief authoritative work on English grammar. It should not seem flattering for Englishmen and Americans to be sent to Berlin to study the English language. As to the study of the German language in the United States, it may be remarked that next to the English it has the preference over all other living languages, and German literature is receiving marked attention.

It cannot be denied, however, that the strong bent of the German mind to be thorough often loses itself in unknown and unknowable depths. The language of German scholars is frequently cumbersome, unintelligible, and much of their thought, especially in philosophy and religion, is speculative and mystical. Indeed, systems of mystical philosophy and religion are historical characteristics of German learning. It also leads to pedantry which sometimes is quite amusing. It is said of the German poet Uhland that he never wrote a letter without rewriting it, and whenever he found it necessary to scold his cook he would first write out the reprimand, commit it to memory, and then deliver it. It is to be regretted that he did not publish some of these culinary philippics so that the literary world after him might have an idea of just how to acquit itself of that critical duty, without sacrificing anything to literary style and effect.

In the realm of affections the inner life of the German manifests itself by tender love. The common appellation of God is "lieber Gott" (dear God) rather than our reverential "Lord"; and corresponding to this German children love to call their parents by the affectionate "papa" and "mama" instead of father and mother. The conjugal love of the German is ideal. The French and southern romantic nations see in woman first of all sex, and if she be intellectual the charm is heightened. But the German, by virtue of his Innerlichkeit, beholds in woman an object of deep respect, a respect which rises to veneration. He feels that in her slumber powers of the soul

that lovingly supplement his own inner life: a contemplative mind, a prevision, which, while based largely on feeling, often outweighs his own cold judgment. Tacitus observes this when he says: "Aliquid sanctum et providum," meaning there is something sacred and prophetic in German women. One of the finest productions of German literature is Göthe's "Iphigenie auf Tauris," in which he shows the powerful influence of German woman over man. In my own experience I have met with many beautiful instances of German love in married life. Not long ago I was told of a German minister whose mind was supposed to be deranged, because, after his wife died, he spoke to her for days as if she were still present. The man was perfectly sane. His peculiar deportment was only an expression of his intense love to his wife. This is also true of other relations in life. The story is told of a German valet who was so strongly attached to his master that when the latter sank to abject poverty, the valet refused to leave him, but helped make the living, and at the same time revered him as his master. Of the German soldiers returning from France, from the war in 1870, it is said that when they saw the Rhine the officers lost control of the men, the soldiers rushed pell-mell to the banks of the river, weeping tears of joy. We shall have further occasion to refer to this beautiful trait of German character.

In matters of knowledge, the German would see deep; in his heart-life he desires to feel the full warmth of love; but when he exercises his will he glories in the strength of his determination. His will, therefore, is a part of his "Innerlichkeit." This is so strong that it marks him at once an individualist. But powerful as the German will is, he will not exercise it until he knows what he wants. To understand the German as an individualist it is worth our while to make a psychological explanation.

Of the two manifestations of soul-life, intellect and will, the will is the constant element, the intellect the movable. The will is in itself void of content. Not until influenced by the intellect or feeling, can it make itself known or felt. If the will be the strongest factor, it will force both intellect and feelings into subordination; if, however, the intellect or feelings dominate, the will will be less vigorous. In the German the will refuses to act until instructed by the intellect, or impelled by the feelings, and because both his will and feelings must be consulted thoroughly, he is not so quick to act as the Frenchman, Englishman or Yankee is. However, after his will

has been properly advised he will press on to his purpose with inexhaustible and indefatigable endurance. His English and American brothers force the intellect into subordination to the will; therefore they are realists. They expect quick and large results and they get them, but mainly along material lines. The German, on the other hand, wants to know the reason why and considers all the costs before he presses forward; but when his mind is cleared up no difficulty is too great for him to surmount, he will patiently plod on and bide the time until his purpose is accomplished. In this respect the German is like George Washington, of whom Thomas Jefferson says: "His mind was great and powerful. . . . it was slow in operation, sure in conclusion. . . . Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration was maturely weighed, and when once decided, going through with all his purpose, whatever obstacle opposed." Here Saxon meets Saxon, and certainly more agreeably than when Washington met the German regiments at Trenton on that memorable Christmas day, 1776.

Such intelligent persistency is bound to develop strong individualists, of whom the German people have ever had many. One needs only to study the lives of Charlemagne and Luther, the two greatest personalities of the Germans in all ages, to see how powerful German individualism is and acts. Luther, notwithstanding his sincere humility, once said of himself: "I am a man well known in heaven, on earth, and in hell," a popularity worth coveting.

We are, therefore, not surprised to find individualism a fundamental feature in German literature. To delineate the character of the individual man from the view point of his inner life, rather than from his relation to society, has ever been the aim of German authors. From the early "Fragment of Hildebrant to His Son Hadubrandt" down through all history, biography, novels, poetry, stories, the hero is represented as working out his greatness by his own inner self, and it is for this reason that Göthe's "Faust" has become the greatest production of German literature; for Faust represents the inner life of Göthe, idealized by the poet's genius.

Such formation of character is very desirable, because it is original and brings out just what there is in man. Germans admire the "self-made man" in America. Should we not also admire the self made inner man in the German? It is pleasant to note how we suggest one another in this respect.

This trait of character lies so deeply imbedded in the German mind that it is often amusing to see to what degree of sentimentality he is reduced by it. It reminds one of the German whom the English poet Coleridge met in Frankfort, who always took off his hat with profound respect when he ventured to speak of himself. It is simply ludicrous, not to say childish, to see how the German individualizes himself in his correspondence. If he writes a letter to a tailor, or architect, or contractor, he must not fail to say on the envelope, Mr. Tailor-master Schmitt, Mr. Architect Brown, Mr. Contractor Schneider; or, as an unkind American wit once remarked, if Mr. Lange is a garbage collector, don't forget, in addressing a letter to his wife, to say: "Mrs. Garbage Collector Lange." But strong as his consciousness of himself as an individual may be, it is not so strong as that of his Anglo-Saxon brothers, the English and American, who write I with a capital letter, and you with a small letter, even in direct address; the German reverses the order.

This trend of German character, while undoubtedly innate with the German tribes, has ever been fostered by the indoor habits of the German, the cold, raw, northern climate compelling him to spend a good part of the year in the house. Besides, in the early days of Germany the country was sparsely settled, isolating the individual families.

Following the long, hard winter, Germany enjoys a prolonged spring, rich in flowers and bird-song, while in the summer the plentiful harvest, the heavily laden fruit and nut trees, the grand forests, and such scenery as the Rhine affords, draw forth the deep joy of the German breast. No wonder that Germany is a land of song and music.

This brings us to the manifestation of German Innerlichkeit—Gemütlichkeit, another untranslatable word. What are we to understand by it?

1. Depth and warmth of feeling, as it is peculiarly found in the German.

2. A sympathetic state of the feelings, by which the German feels himself drawn to others sharing the same feelings.

3. A tranquil state of the mind. The German speaks of a meek, soft, quiet Gemüt; or reverses it, an excited, harsh, angry Gemüt.

4. Cordiality; congeniality; sociableness; goodnaturedness.

5. As to environments: comfort. As we speak of a cozy room or chair, so the German finds his room, chair, coat, pipe, gemütlich.



Perhaps the strongest agency by which the German Gemüt is transmitted into our American soul-life is German music. It unquestionably takes the lead of all music in the United States, for that matter in the world. What musical creations, for example, have become such cherished and sacred favorites with us as Händel's "Messiah" and Haydn's "Creation?" And why? Not only because their subjects are of such a lofty character, but also because they give deep expression to the Gemüt. Let us inquire into this. We ask the question: What is music? It will answer our purpose to class it under two heads: that which pleases the ear, and that which speaks to the soul.

Italian music, for example, seeks pre-eminently to please the ear. It is sweet, melodious, even; clear and transparent in its harmony; simple in its rhythm; consistent in its development. Its first aim is the aesthetic effect. It imposes no burden on the understanding; develops no dialectic processes, avoids entanglements and rapid transitions—in short Italian music is of a light character and, therefore, very popular.

The German, on the other hand, speaks, by the symbols of music, from the depths of his large soul, and appeals to all there is in man. The word oratorio is quite significant as a German musical designation. In his music he cares not whether he pleases or pains, whether it is difficult or easy of interpretation. He says all he thinks, presents himself just as he is, concealing nothing. German composers are strong individualists. If, therefore, you would understand German music, study the author, study the German character. Take for example the world's greatest musical genius, whose music is now coming more and more to the front in America—Beethoven. Why does his music so mightily stir the human heart? Because in it he had wedded the highest genius to the deepest feelings in man, be it that these feelings pertain to things human or divine. But these feelings are intensely Beethoven's own feelings. In his symphonies he is telling you of his hard struggles in life; of his deep sorrows, and of the final victory, especially of that blessed hope beyond. Now what characterizes Beethoven most is his sympathetic music, his *Andantes*, *Adagios*, *Larghettos*. In these he tells the world of his deep sorrow, mixed with beautiful, sweet comfort. The depth, softness, and sweetness of feeling with which he accomplishes this shows to you the richness of the German Gemüt. What Beethoven's great affliction was, we all know. He was deaf, in his

latter years so deaf that when his celebrated "Ninth Symphony" was rendered in Vienna he could hear nothing of the music nor the tremendous applause. Friends turned his chair around so that he might see the waving of handkerchiefs and hats. "His works are the fruits of bitter thought and sorrow, the results of a passionate but consciously painful strife for ideal aims. He who had given to the world enjoyment and elevation of the heart, should himself drink the bitter cup of being deprived of the sense of hearing. But how grand is the spectacle of an artist deprived of all intercourse with what to him in this world was dearest, and yet pouring forth the lonely aspirations of his soul, all the more sublime as we seem to hear in them the innermost spirit of mankind." In Beethoven we have the extraordinary illustration of how, in the hands of God, affliction may further sublimate the efforts of an artist, even if, on the other hand, they, poignantly intensified his sufferings as a man; indeed, it is thought that the deafness of Beethoven drove him into the innermost recesses of his soul.

In his capacity of the world's greatest musical genius he might have said, and in his own language he did say: "Behold, and see if there be a sorrow like my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me." To this deep pain, but also to the soothing, divine comfort he felt, he gave expression in his works. Knowing these facts, we begin to understand Beethoven's music and gain an insight into the German mind.

I have spoken at length on German music, because through it as through a main channel, the German character is exerting a deep and lasting influence on the American people.

What German music is to the ear, German homelife is to the eye. In the home of the German, his deep Gemüt, that is his warm love, is displayed. In traveling in Germany you will observe that the private houses do not present a large cable-end toward the street. Nor are the gardens in the front. The German home shuts itself off from the world at large. It is in the interior of the house, and in the garden in the rear, where the home-life makes itself known. To the German the home is his dearest place on earth. He suffers intensely from home-sickness, and no literature is more pathetic in this respect than the German.

What, then, are the features that make German home-life beautiful? First, a German home is a model of cleanliness and order. Where is there a land whose fields, forests and cities present greater

neatness and better order than Germany's. This is due to the cleanliness of the homes and their occupants. If the German speaks of "ein gemütliches Zimmer" (a comfortable room) he does not mean luxury, but cleanliness, sunlight and cheer. If, during the middle ages, a German had committed a mortal sin, one of the commonest punishments inflicted by the church was to deprive him for one week of his daily bath. This is important; for external cleanliness always exerts a good influence on the heart. We find it so in the German. Corresponding to his habits of cleanliness, we find a good moral atmosphere in German homes. History informs us that of all pagan tribes the Germans were the only ones who did not practice polygamy. When the Germans were yet worshipping Wotan, Donar, Nerthus, and Frija monogamy was so strict a law with them that a wife who committed adultery was shorn of her hair, unclothed, and whipped through the streets of the village.

How beautiful German family life is by virtue of its simplicity, contentedness, respect, and affection no author has depicted more exquisitely than the modern German classic writer, Heinrich Seidel. For the sake of reading his books, it would be worth while to learn the German language, all the more, because his deep pathos scorns translation. One of the stories he tells is of a young man twenty-three years old who loved a girl five years his junior. He asked the father for the hand of the maiden, but was stoutly refused. They agree to wait until the father will consent. Twenty-five years pass by, but the father remains obdurate. After the expiration of twenty-five years a friend proposes to celebrate the silver engagement. The sorry festival is really held. The hero of the book proposes to the young people, who are now respectively forty-eight and forty-three years old, to marry without the father's consent. "Oh, no," answered the lover, "if we marry without father's consent there will be no blessing in our home; we must wait." Would not our American youth have a happy wedding in spite of the "old man?"

From what has been said it should not be inferred that German families are reclusive. Quite the contrary. Just recently a noteworthy feature has been introduced into the German home-life, the so called "Volksabende." These are social gatherings held in private homes for the purpose of furthering German culture. A number of congenial friends meet in a home on an evening. A German author is taken up, say Schiller. Several of his poems are read and discussed, one is declaimed, also one or two choice songs are sung. If the

family has a musical instrument, a production from a German master is rendered. All this is done in the interest of culture and socialness, and in an unconventional manner. Evangelical ministers have taken this movement in hand.

To do justice to the good nature of the German, mention should be made of his wit and humor. Every nation possesses humor peculiar to itself. German humor differs from English and American in that it indulges little in smart sayings. The pun, so extensively employed in American humorous literature, is used only sparingly by the German. He is not sprightly like the Frenchmen, nor quick in his conclusions like the American. His nature is to be naive, bland, grotesque, dry. The clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, have ever been the source of the best German humor. That explains why there is so much love in it. The best German humor is an outburst of deep, warm feeling. They love to laugh through tears. The greatest German humorists are always men of deep pathos. This humor is not met so much in current wits and jokes, as rather in works in which droll or humorous natures are characterized. Of all the humorous literature that has come to my notice no book has made such a lasting impression on me as Reuter's works. Now you are bathing your face in tears of pathos, and now you are rolling in convulsions of laughter. Being written in a dialect of the Low-German, translation is out of the question. But it is to be regretted that these exquisitely written books cannot be given to the whole world. By way of characterization, permit me to tell a few German jokes.

Büchsel, a noted Berlin minister, was teaching a class of catechumens. He explained to his scholars the work of creation, especially the creation of Adam and Eve. A young girl sneeringly remarked: "My papa says we all descend from the monkey." "You tell your father we cannot consider family affairs here." That German professors are not to be trifled with is proved by an anecdote of a certain professor who, though "odd" in appearance and manner, could be even with most people in wit and repartee. On one occasion he went into a railway carriage, of which the only occupants were a couple of "giddy girls," who seemed to find much fun in quizzing their queer but learned companion. Determined to punish them for their impertinence, the professor waited until the train was passing through a long tunnel, when taking advantage of the darkness, he gave two sounding kisses to the back of his own hand. The

returning light of the open air revealed the mutual suspicions of the two ladies, between whom there was an obvious coolness for the rest of the journey. Arrived at his destination, the professor alighted, but before doing so he told his companions that he did not know to whom of them he was indebted for the kiss in the tunnel, but that he could assure them he should always regard it as the one bright incident in a long, dull journey. Prince Bismarck was one day entertaining a foreign ambassador. Suddenly, in the course of the conversation, the Prince drew his chair close to his guest's and said to him: "Can you keep a secret?" The ambassador, thinking the Prince was about to divulge some important matter of state, answered, "Yes, sir, I can." The Prince, with a twinkle in his eye replied: "So can I." A certain German, owner of a small house, had effected an insurance on it of eight hundred dollars, although it had been built for much less. The house burnt down, and the company refused to pay more than its actual value—about six hundred dollars. "If you wish it," said the cashier of the insurance company, "we will build you a house larger and better than the one burnt down, as we are positive that it can be done for even less than six hundred dollars." To this proposition the German objected, and at last was compelled to take the six hundred dollars. Some weeks after he had received the money he was called upon by the same agent, who wanted him to take out a policy of life insurance on himself or his wife.

"Nein, nein, you 'surance fellows be all tiefs! If I insure mein wife, and mein wife teis, and I go to de office to get mein two tousand thalers, do I get de money, Oh, Nein! You vill say to me, 'Sie vas not worth two tousand talers: sie vas vort 'bout six hundred. If you don't like de six hundred talers ve vill give you a better and a bigger wife.' "

In no respect does German heart-life reveal itself so beautifully as in religion. The German is by nature deeply religious. Even in the days of heathendom the German, like the American Indian, worshipped no idols; and today, in the German literary classes, where men have broken away from the positive Christian faith, you will find a form of religion, the so-called unconfessional religion, almost every man working out views peculiar to himself. The German cannot shut God out of his thoughts, however far he may have wandered away from the God of the Bible.

The chief characteristic of German religiousness is piety. The German loves to speak of the pious Gemüt. The first words, one of my German professors taught his children to say were: "Abba,"

“dear Father.” In Germany most children are baptized on the third day after their birth. This is done in the deep consciousness that they belong in the kingdom of God. No Christian people is more faithful in the religious instruction of their children than are the Germans. In early years they are taught the Bible in the form of a child’s Bible history, the catechism with about three hundred Bible verses, and the choicest hymns. Almost everybody goes to church in Germany. German soldiers are even compelled to attend divine services. In many localities the churches are not large enough to contain all who wish to attend, in which places several services are held on the Lord’s day, to give all an opportunity. No matter how long the distance or how inclement the weather may be the grown members of the family will go to church. If any one is hindered from going, the parting word is, “pray for me.” This is especially true at Christmas time. The German would not think of lighting his Christmas tree or distributing his present before going to church, be the weather good or bad. And here let me say that the Christmas tree is not a survival of the Yulefest. It is a distinct Christian and German invention. The Christmas trees were first trimmed in the early part of the seventeenth century, in Alsace, in the neighborhood of Strassburg. The candles were added a long time afterward, by the Swedes. Assuredly the Christmas tree has heightened the joy of all children of Christendom, and by it the German reveals his vivid, picturesque conception of the nativity — the night lit up with the glory of God.

The home-life presents various striking traits of piety. In every German home you will find a Bible, in most, a prayer-book, a hymnal which is both sung and read, and in very many, books of sermons by the most devout preachers. This sacred literature accounts largely for German piety. On the exterior of many houses in rural districts Biblical verses, or Christian poetical inscriptions, are found; while on the walls of the rooms Christian mottoes are displayed. In some farming regions the farmer, while he sows the seed, repeats some pious sentence like, “with God,” “may He bless it,” “in His Name.” In some regions, on the day when the first fruits are reaped, the people go to church, to dedicate the harvest to God. In the evening, on coming home from the field, the housewife, as she lights the candle, may be heard to say, “Light, dear Lord, after this life, the lamp of heavenly light for us.”

All public institutions in Germany are manned, largely, by men

and women who have been trained in the Wichern schools, in which especially men receive a Christian training for work in public institutions; while the number of deaconesses who nurse the sick, raise the fallen, and look up and teach neglected children aggregates above twelve thousand.

But while all this is true, and while much more could be said in favor of German religiousness, it is also true that the spiritual condition of the German Church is in a deplorable state. Ministers in Germany have themselves confessed that the larger parishes are spiritual cemeteries. It is a fact of history that Germany has had only two national revivals, the first in the days of the Reformation, the other, Spener's Pietism. Why should this be so? Not because the Protestant Churches of Germany are not true evangelical Churches. They certainly are. It simply is so because of the thralldom of the State Church. A German minister is a state official and as such stands head and shoulders above the people. Not only that, he is not directly amenable to the Church, and, consequently, may teach unscriptural views. If he be a professor of theology he will find the well-beaten paths hard to tread, and to attract students he may be tempted to teach sensational views, a scheme not infrequently resorted to. I believe every one of the higher critics, from Eichorn down to Wellhausen, was an infidel, a man who held theological office for the name or notoriety it might give him. It should also be observed that the State Church has never been favorable to evangelistic movements, and thus it is that spiritual death reigns at large. Thanks be to God for the Constitution of the United States which divorces the Church from the State! Be it so evermore! If Germany had a free Church, conversion of heart and experimental religion would be insisted on as in our country, and the German Church, by virtue of the strong soul-life of the German, would rise a power in all the earth as she was in the days of Luther. But let it be said with emphasis, there are even now many faithful ministers in Germany and there is much true piety among the people; and while the masses of Germans emigrating to our country remain true to their church traditions, after the first generation the trend is toward the American Churches. In these they rank with the best of its membership.

May God awaken another Luther to arouse the German Church to shake the shackles of the State from off her feet, and make her a "holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, that it may show

forth the praises of Him who called it out of darkness into His marvellous light!" Then, and not till then, will her troubled waters of higher criticism and every other form of rationalism come to rest, and she will go forth conquering and to conquer.

Let me call your attention to one more characteristic in the German, a strong and leading trait in his character—his indefatigable industry. Whether the German be a peasant, or artisan, or scholar he is always a busy, hardworking man. "Inactivity", says the German, "is our greatest enemy". This is necessarily so. In his climate no zephyr winds fan him to sleep, no luscious fruits grow of their own accord, and the land is densely populated. The German must either work or die. But he naturally loves to work. How strongly this trait is stamped on the German character may be seen from the fact that every male member of the royal family must learn a trade. The present Kaiser is by trade a glove-maker, his brother, Prince Henry, a watch-maker, to say nothing of the severe and laborious discipline under which the sons of the Hohenzollern are brought up.

To German industry the United States owes largely, very largely, its development. As tillers of the soil, German farmers rank unexcelled in the whole world. With industry they combine simple habits of life, and, therefore, thrive. You will find them in large numbers in every state of the Union, in Wisconsin there are counties in which comparatively little English is spoken. Nor is there a state in which they have not numbered strong as pioneers. From their sons and daughters, who have grown up under American influences, all our large cities are drawing a heavy quota of staunch citizens, men and women who count for physical strength and firm character.

In a like proportion the Germans have contributed to the manufacturing and commercial interests of the land. The first glass and iron foundries were erected by Baron von Stiegel. The water works along the Manockisy, built by German Moravians, served as models for New York and Philadelphia. The bridge spanning the East river in New York was built by a German. The first flat boat on the Ohio was steered by a German. The first voyage down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans was made by a German. It was a German who invented the machine to raise the snags in the Mississippi. Two Germans were the first white men to cross the Alleghenies. On a stately oak on Old Barren can this day be seen the



names of five Germans who were associates of Boone. The Germans were the first white men who planted potatoes in Pennsylvania and Kentucky, and they built the first brewery in the United States.

In colonial days the greatest and richest merchant was John Astor, the father of "O. K.", meaning all good, which he pronounced "oll kut".

It is also a fact of history that the German schools of the colonies were recognized to be the best, and were looked upon as models. Representative Prosser says, "The only four regiments in the last war (civil) in which every man could write his name, were German regiments." As has already been said, American institutions, not only colleges and universities, but also public schools owe a debt to German methods of thoroughness and exactness.

Nor should it be forgotten that some of our foremost abolitionists were Germans. Pastorius, that man of universal knowledge, the leader of German mass-immigration, moved the citizens of Pennsylvania to present the question of negro emancipation to the State Legislature. The German Moravians joined in the fight. Wherever the Germans set their foot on southern soil the first thing they did was to liberate their slaves. They were also the first to erect schools for the negroes. Never, in the history of the German people, was such a thing as keeping slaves known. In this respect the Germans helped immensely in the forming of the national character of the United States.

If, on account of these and other virtues, we have learned to respect and love the German, our love and respect become pathetic when we consider his loyalty to the Stars and Stripes. Never was there a battle fought in behalf of American liberty but that, when the roll was afterward called, there were German names, often many, to which no response came. In the French-English war the German settlements formed the outposts against the enemy. German regiments repelled the first assaults of the English Tories and Red-skins. Under the leadership of the German General Herkimer, peace was purchased in the Battle of Oriskany. This man was also the first patriot to unfold the Stars and Stripes on an American battlefield. The order had come from Washington that the Stars and Stripes should form the American flag. But the battle was on, and in all haste General Herkimer improvised a flag, by using the red shirt of one soldier, the blue blouse of another, and the white petticoat of a woman.

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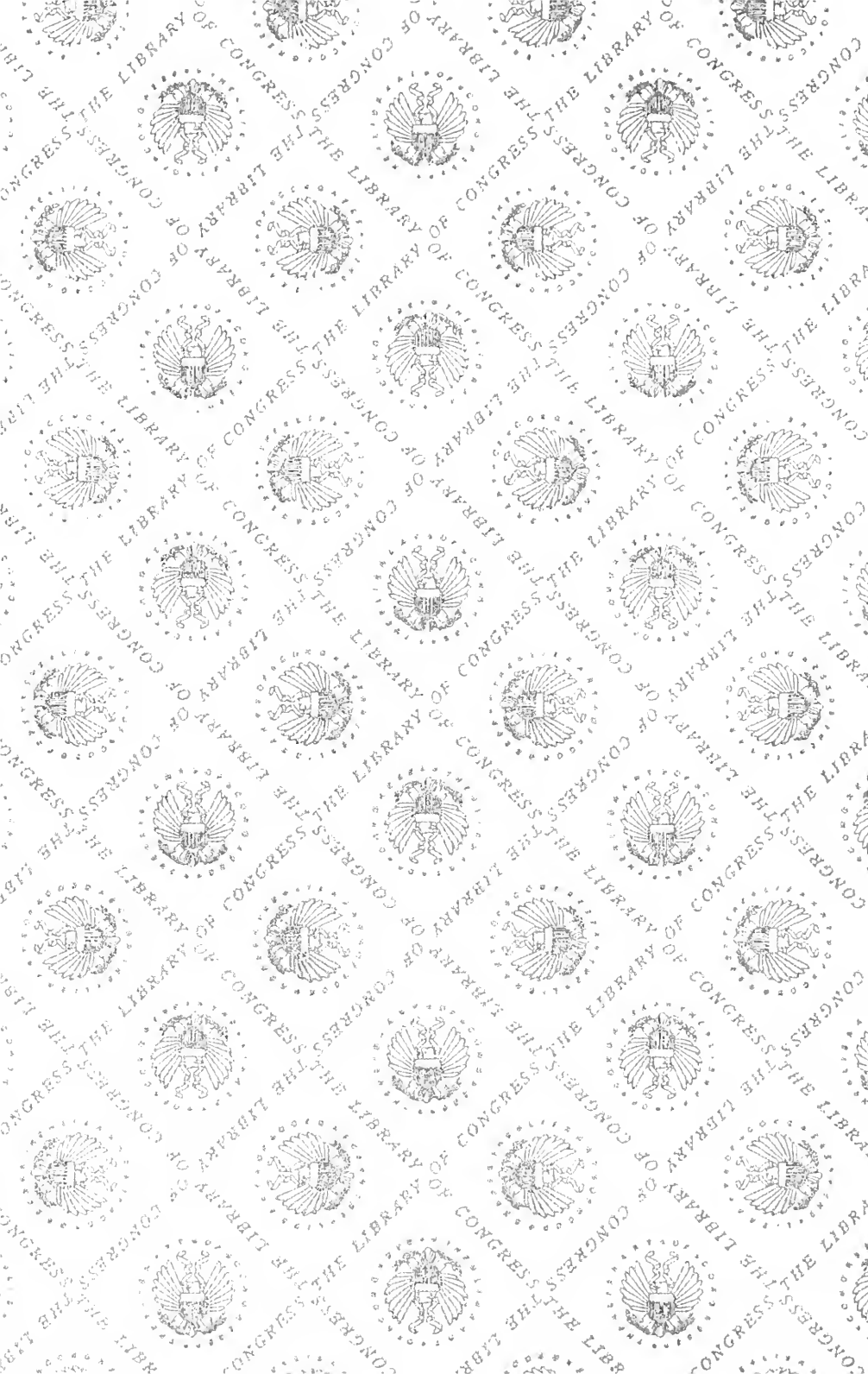
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This tale of German loyalty and bravery was told over in the Wyoming Valley, along the Savannah and Congerrie, in Pennsylvania, the Virginias and the Carolinas. The name of Heister, Müller, Schmeisser, Dritt, Fabiger, Kalteisen, Hüger and the excellent Mühlenberg have gone into colonial history, while the names of DeKalb and von Steüben have been immortalized by the counties and towns named after them.

In the war of the rebellion the names of so many German generals as Sigel, Kiefer, Steinwehr, Kautz, Osterhaus, Willig, Schimelpfenning, Weitzel, Salmon, give us an idea of how large a percentage the German privates must have been, and the fact that of one regiment of three hundred and fifty men only fifty survived death on the battlefield proves the valor with which these men fought. Of a German Presbyterian minister it is said that when his whole company fled before the enemy, he, in the face of the hail of lead, rallied the men to renewed action, and won the day. Our brother has answered the last roll-call, but the memory of John Berk abides.

When, eleven years ago, I first set my foot on German soil, I was proud that the cradle of my mother had stood on the banks of the Rhine. I then wished that every American might be able to see Germany, for the very face of the country would be an object lesson worthy to be seen and learned. But when my steamer bumped against the pier of Hoboken, and I saw Old Glory waving before the breeze she had a meaning for me as never before and my heart swelled with the thought that my German father had fought four full years under her. God Bless Both Flags!





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